



Audubon CONNECTICUT

185 East Flat Hill Road  
Southbury, CT 06488  
Tel: 203-264-5098  
Fax: 203-264-6332  
[www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING  
January 31, 2011**

**TESTIMONY OF  
SANDY BRESLIN, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS  
AUDUBON CONNECTICUT**

**IN SUPPORT OF: *S.B. 834 AAC MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE PRIORITIES AND FUNDING FOR THE PURCHASE OF SUCH PROJECTS***

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee, on behalf of Audubon Connecticut, the state organization of the National Audubon Society, I am here today to express our ***strong support*** for *S.B. 834 AAC Municipal Open Space Priorities and Funding for the Purchase of Such Projects*.

During these difficult economic times, when state and federal governments are being forced to reduce funding for local communities, S.B. 834 will allow municipalities the option to voluntarily enact an additional real estate conveyance fee of up to 1% of the purchase price above \$150,000. The fee will be paid by buyers and utilized by communities to support critical environmental initiatives ranging from open space and farmland protection to clean water, energy efficiency, transit, and brownfields remediation. At a time when state and federal governmental support dollars are diminishing, the need and opportunities for local conservation remain strong. The ability to raise funds locally is often essential as many state and federal grants require local communities to provide matching funds. S.B. 834 gives municipalities the ability to raise these funds.

**It is important to note that S.B. 834 is:**

- Enabling legislation that allows local communities to choose whether or not to establish a Community Conservation or Green Fund
- Based on a proven tool that has benefited open space and farmland conservation in areas such as the Hudson River Valley, North and South Forks of Long Island, Martha's Vineyard and Block Island and where it is supported by many in the real estate community
- Targeted to conservation in all Connecticut municipalities from small, rural towns to large urban centers

**By supporting local conservation projects, S.B. 834 will:**

- Benefit people, wildlife and the economy
- Help to ensure clean air and clean water in our rivers, lakes, streams and Long Island Sound
- Sequester carbon and combat the effects of global warming
- Safeguard habitat for wildlife
- Support tourism, hunting, fishing, bird watching, hiking and other wild-life associated recreation

Monies generated through S.B. 834 will help to fund projects that will create green jobs, support our economy, improve public health and safeguard quality of life in our state for generations to come.

On behalf of Audubon Connecticut, I urge your support for this key legislation, and thank you for your consideration of our comments.

*Audubon Connecticut, the state organization of the National Audubon Society with more than 10,000 members statewide, works to protect birds, other wildlife and their habitats through education, science and conservation, and legislative advocacy for the benefit of people and the earth's biological diversity. Through our network of nature education centers, protected wildlife sanctuaries, and local, volunteer Chapters, we seek to connect people with nature and inspire the next generation of conservationists.*